AIM

THE BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

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some successes

STATE STREET MEETING

but a long way to go

By Robert Cook

"There are some misconceptions about the State Street project," began Charles Shannon, Director of the Redevelopment Agency, speaking at a meeting of the Wooster Square Association on November 30. "To begin with, this won't be a six-lane highway, but two three-land roads." The outburst of spontaneous laughter which greeted this statement set the tone for the evening. Shannon weasled, misstated, lied, refused to answer direct questions, was arrogant and rude to the audience. The audience responded with laughter, surprise, shock, indignation, and anger.

This sign was put up by Mohawk Market to show their appreciation to those who signed petitions resulting in a written agreement from the City that the market will remain at its State and Court Street location until it can be relocated in the State Street project facilities.

The evening was like many others spent with officials discussing urban renewal in New Haven. The Agency made a presentation; the rest of us responded with questions and criticism. When it was all over, we were told that the project would go ahead as planned. There was one difference this time. The audience of over two hundred (the largest at a Wooster Square Association meeting in recent years) was armed with the AIM Newsletter on State Street. About 1,000 copies were distributed in the neighborhood, and those who read it knew more about the project than Mr. Shannon had intended to reveal.

Shannon made no serious effort to justify or explain the whys behind

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REPORT ON HILLHOUSE

SEE MIMEOGRAPHED INSERT

AIM

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to our readers

With this issue we begin what we hope will be a continuing dialogue in the pages of the AIM Newsletter on the subject of education. We want the views of students, parents, teachers, psychologists, sociologists, economists, political scientists, and CITIZENS on what's wrong and what can be done about it. We know that many studies -- some of them excellent -- have already been made. But usually they lie in stacks on desks at the Board of Education without ever being put into effect in the public school system. We hope to make ideas available to people who are committed to political action. The recent trouble at Hillhouse high school points up very dramatically and tragically the need for serious thought and action to resolve the problems within the New Haven school system. We hope to present a good deal more on the Hillhouse situation in the coming newsletter issues.

In this issue, one former teacher suggests some possible reasons for the present gap between theory and practice. The central role of education in the shape of today's society is also clearly stated: If we are to make meaningful changes for the society of tomorrow, we cannot afford to neglect education.

The report on LEAP suggests some of the difficulties which plague many attempts now underway to tackle the most blatant failure of the present educational system, namely, in the black community. Most obviously, it underlines the vastness of the economic outlay which is required to make any serious changes. With an annual budget of $13,000 exclusive of the labor of the large staff, LEAP provides only a cultural supplement to the main impact of public school education for twelve students! The effort to involve the families of these students highlights a very crucial failure of present school programs. The goodwill and energy of the people who volunteer their time for this program deserve high praise. But the casual parenthesis toward the end of the article-- "most have already left their original school for a white one in another neighborhood" -- pinpoints what we feel is a disastrous misconception at the heart of the scheme. In attempting to indoctrinate promising black children with entirely white cultural values, the program has the inevitable effect -- if not the intention -- of siphoning off potential leaders by intensifying their alienation from their black identity. And while the program focuses attention on the deep hostility of the present school environment to creative learning, it also diverts precious talents and energies away from the vital political task of changing that environment for all the pupils.

Finally, like so many well-intentioned programs directed at black people, it begins with an "expert's" vision and ends by treating the participants like guinea pigs. The proger place to begin, we suggest, is by asking black people what their priorities are for changes in the system. This is not to exclude the vital role of expert knowledge and experimentation in the field of education. But we suggest that genuinely successful programs are most likely to result from an open dialogue between the experts and those who suffer directly from the present system and must live with the consequences of any new system. This dialogue will be meaningless if the people most affected continue to lack the political power to accept or reject the program.

--The Editors

RENEW AIM SUBSCRIPTIONS

TIME TO BEGIN RENEWING YOUR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

The subscription period for the AIM Newsletter runs from Jan. to Jan. All expire at one time because we don't, at this time, have the equipment or personnel necessary to keep subscriptions on an individual order basis.
If you subscribe anytime during the year, you receive all past copies, so each subscriber does get a full years subscription.

We ask you please to subscribe now, because the Newsletter account has hit rock bottom! With the coming establishment of a printing press this year, our costs will fall greatly, but right now we need money to continue operating.
PLEASE RENEW NOW

If you subscribed very recently, in the past two months, we will consider it a subscription for next year.

PICKETING THE INDUCTION CENTER

by Henry Tamarin

Photo by Dave Dickson

On Friday morning, December 9, some 350 people walked from the Yale campus to the Selective Service Induction Center at 640 Chapel Street to form a picket in protest of the war and the draft. The group was dominated by students from Yale and other colleges in Connecticut. A number of people had come prepared to commit civil disobedience and they provided the drama to an otherwise peaceful scene. The 100 or so cops present had arranged the physical layout of the demonstration in such a manner as to make it impossible to do anything without their being aware of it. The demonstrators were corraled in a rectangular area on Chapel St. that was formed by a solid line of police barricades nailed together. The cops(including auxiliary police and at least half the local FBI office -- full time and part time help) stood inbetween the demonstrators and the front door of the induction center. There were also police who patrolled the sides and rear of the building. Those people that wanted to commit civil disobedience gathered at one end of the barricaded area. Announcements were sent out through the crowd. The detectives who wanted to hear what was being planned gathered slightly behind the civil disobedience group.

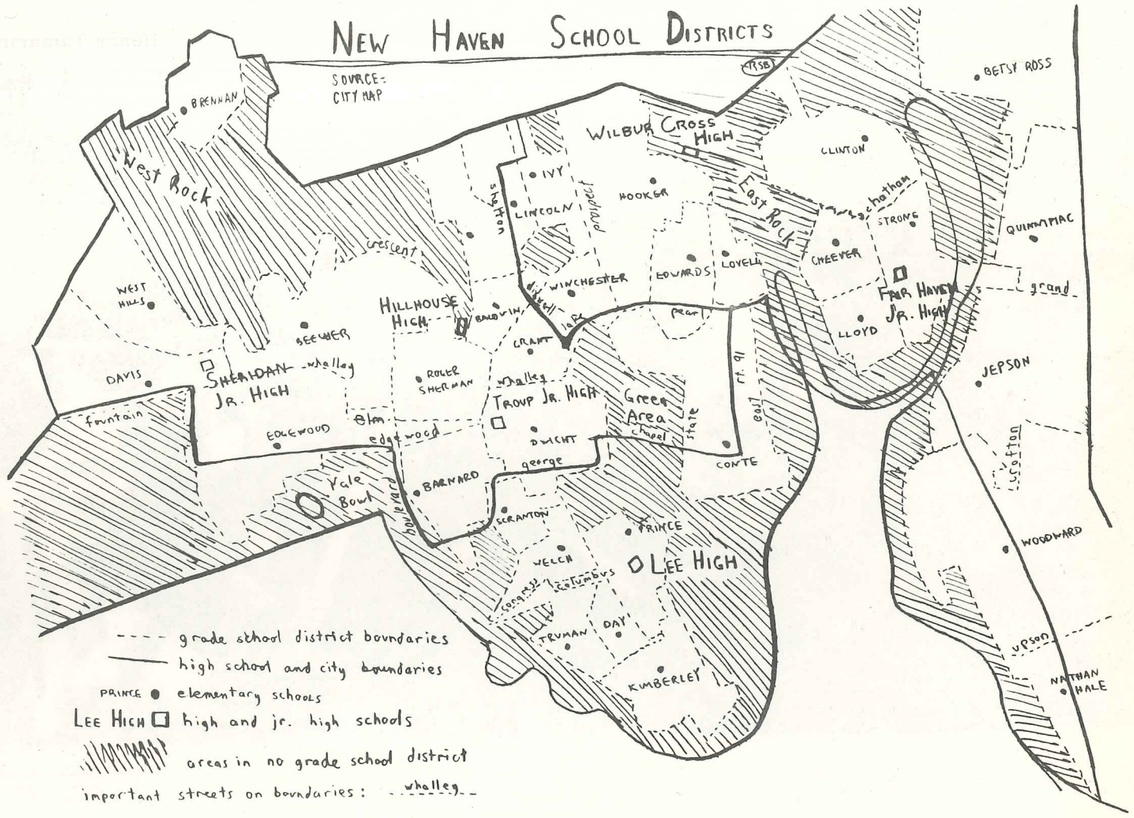
When a group of about ten people charged the police lines to get into the induction center some of them didn't even make it over the barricades but had to be dragged over to be arrested. The others made it only a few feet.

Somebody fell down under the crowd, head scraping the pavement. No blood was seen, but it was rough and like the appearance of any strong force, it got people upset. For the first time the demonstration was able to sustain a chant of "Hell No, We Won't Go."

Other people still wanted to get arrested. They made arrangements with the cops so that it wouldn't be too rough. Some crossed an agreed upon line and when the cops said "you're under arrest" they walked quietly to the paddy wagons. A total of about 30 people were arrested during the demonstration, the rest of us just walked around and chanted occassionally.

The demonstration was planned to continue all day but around noon it formed into a march back to the Yale Campus and ended after a brief rally at Beinke Plaza.

The demonstration didn't close down the induction center, but then again it wan't supposed to. It was a good picket with a lot of people and a lot of publicity, but the direct or even indirect results of that are not clear. The arrests were incidental to the demonstration as a whole, yet it seems that if people are willing and even desirous of breaking the law, even if only to demonstrate the sincerity of their convictions, there may be better ways of doing it.



THEORY and PRACTICE .... in education

The following is an interview with a former teacher in the New Haven Public School System.

Q. To what do you attribute the widely publicized failure of the Public Schools?

A. One can't point to any one factor as the cause. It isn't the poorly educated teachers, unmotivated students, inadequate facilities or rigid bureaucracy - it's all of them and more.

Education is supposed to be an introduction to the cultural heritage and wisdom of our civilization. It should be a means to enjoy and create good literature, music, philosophy, history, science, etc. A means to understand the world, appreciate what's good in it and learn how to change what isn't. These need to be the goals of teachers and students, as they are in some of our best private and suburban schools. These are not the goals of our public schools. Public school students and teachers are certainly not the best representatives of our culture.

Q. Why aren't you teaching now?

A. I am not used to being treated like an idiot, constantly constrained, unable to participate in decisions that affect my job and force me to obey the arbitrary rules of uneducated administrators. In so many public schools the self-respecting, intelligent, educated people can't tolerate their working conditions.

I am a part of the teacher exodus from public schools. Elementary school teachers teach between 25 and 35 children constantly for the entire day. When they leave school they are too exhausted to keep up with the new research in their field, or pursue the variety of interests that contribute to expressive teaching. It is no accident that there is a thirty year gap between educational theory and practice.

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....in education cont.

Q. After Russia's Sputnick, Americans tried to compete with the U.S.S.R. by improving the schools. They seem to have failed. Why?

A. We have been having an "educational crisis" for the last ten years, but little has changed. That can't be an accident in the richest, most efficient nation in the world. Our educational goal is not to introduce our civilization. Our goal seems to be to create docile, draftable laborers -- white and blue collar -- because that is certainly the public schools' only achievement.

Q. What of the shortage of highly trained scientists, administrators, etc. that education is supposed to remedy?

A. To train the scientists and administrators we need, we'd have to provide excellent basic public education for everyone. Then, by studying how individuals respond to that education we could further identify and further educate the specialists our society needs. There are millions of children who could have become great assets to our culture, but who couldn't make it because their basic education was inadequate or stifled their interest in further education.

Q. Yet, why is education allowed to remain inadequate if it prevents the development of the very skills we need?

A. The answer, I think, is a social and political problem. Most of the jobs our society offers still strike those who perform them as dull, routine -- simply a means to get the money to really live after working hours. If we educated all the people in order to find the most brilliant, how many would be satisfied with life on the assembly line, filing papers, selling, running an elevator, or fighting in Vietnam? Educated people might demand jobs that allow them to create and execute their own programs that involve participating in the decisions that determine the goals and procedures of their chosen fields. For example, America's more educated people, the college and graduate students, are among her most discontented and volatile citizens. Many of them already reject the future America is providing for them. If we educated all our children we would have to make radical changes in the kinds and amounts and purposes of the jobs we offer. We could no longer count on docile draftees and laborers.

Q. Doesn't someone have to do all of the dull jobs?

A. First of all, if there is boring work all should share it, just as we all should share creative and enjoyable kinds of work. Secondly, our scientists tell us that most menial and white collar work can now be done by machines. If the 24 billion dollars spent annually on the war in Vietnam would instead be used to substitute machines for uninteresting labor, perhaps we could soon eliminate the need for dull work. Till then wouldn't the best arrangement be to educate all our people and have both dull and creative jobs taken by everyone at different times in their lives so that no group always sits on the top of the others on the bottom?

Q. Do you think there is some plot to keep most children uneducated so they'll accept boring jobs?

A. No, it's not a plot. It's the result of a society that has rich and poor classes. The rich create schools that will keep their children on the top by giving them the best education to gain the best jobs. Wealthy suburban public schools are restricted to the wealthy because they are the only people who can afford to live in their districts. The rest of the children go to urban public schools and serve to replenish the ranks of the poor and lower class people who perform the routine jobs in our society and die in our wars.

Q. Why is education so important anyway?

A. Without it no new individual can even know, much less enjoy and share in furthering all men's knowledge and experience of what there is in the world to understand, enjoy and change. True education includes an understanding of ones environment. One cannot improve ones own life, or the lives of others, without understanding how things got to be as they are. We don't live in a vacuum. To understand and help each other we have to understand the forces operating on us. "Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

Q. What is to be done?

A. Teachers could join the increasingly vocal movement of low income parents for better education. They could help parents see and work for the social changes necessary for a new public school system that allows their children to develop into thinking people.

Q. Given the current teacher exodus from the public schools you mentioned earlier, what kinds of teachers now remain in the schools.

A. By and large, single women eager for secure, steady, social status jobs; the resigned who have given up their ideals; men who use teaching positions as stepping stones to administrative posts, the docile, the unimaginative, the uneducated who can get no other "professional" work due to their education at teachers colleges. There are significant exceptions to this, but by and large the old maxim, "Those who can do, those who can't teach", is true of public schools.

Q. What kind of person ought to be a teacher?

A. People who enjoy and respect all people, including children. People who are enthusiastic about life, who are themselves an example of what education can do to allow a person to fulfill himself. This kind of person can rarely last in the public school.

ITALIAN POWER?

By Joseph A. Russo

On Tuesday evening, October 31, while much of the city was thinking about Halloween, about 1200 New Haveners of Italian descent were thinking about something much more important. They gathered for a rally at Lee High School auditorium to make a public show of solidarity against what they saw as a dangerous outbreak of anti-Italian sentiment in town. Heading the meeting were some of the more important New Haveners with Italian names: Democratic State Senator Frank Piccolo; Republican Aldermanic candidate Blanche Porto; Judge Dominic DiPonte; Fred Rossomando, associate superintendent of the East Haven Schools; John Cassidento, asst. U.S. attorney; Albert Annunziata, attorney and former Prosecutor in the Sixth Circuit Court; Phil Mancini, Chief Prosecutor in the Sixth Circuit Court and a former Republican candidate for Mayor, and others.

The meeting was sparked primarily by the unfortunate and by now well-known remarks of Reverend Gerald F. Gilmore made some weeks earlier. Various speakers at the meeting vehemently denounced Gilmore as a bigot, chiefly because of his comment to the effect that New Haven needs not primarily an Italian mayor, but a good mayor, and because of his denunciation of Salvatore Ferraiuolo for his criminal record, a denunciation set in the context of warnings against the growing danger that certain criminal elements posed to New Haven. While at least one speaker granted that the first remark, taken at face value, was not necessarily anti-Italian, there was unanimous and spirited agreement that the comments about criminal elements threatening to take over the city was a thinly veiled slur at the Italian-American community. Anti-Gilmore sentiment at the meeting therefore ran pretty high. It culminated in a resolution--passed with overwhelming unity and intensity--that the Reverend Mr. Gilmore be relieved of his positions with the Redevelopment Agency and with CPI.

The meeting was also characterized by strong criticism of Mayor Lee--indeed it was implied in no uncertain terms that Gilmore was fronting for Lee, that the statements that gave so much offense were in fact written for him by the Lee administration and were politically motivated. Exactly what these political objectives were was never spelled out but left in a kind of ominous ambiguity, although hints were there for those who would read them. One claim made openly was that the Italians in New Haven have been systematically kept from holding offices in the police department and elsewhere in the city.

Now what really brought this meeting into being? Are the Italians being hyper-sensitive, or are they in some degree justified in seeing themselves as the victims of covert prejudice and, what is perhaps more important, hidden but effective political suppression? And what do they, taking a public stand as a group, really want?

Least important in all this, really, is the statement of Rev. Gilmore and the attitudes it may have revealed. To this observer, the long list of speakers that evening divided evenly into two groups. First were those who seemed motivated chiefly by anger at Gilmore. They honestly felt he had betrayed unpleasant personal prejudices, and they were highly indignant. The message of these people was, essentially, "Dump Gilmore!" and this was the avowed purpose of the resolution passed at the end of the evening. But this resolution revealed only the short-term goals. More significant, I think, were the points raised by some of the later speakers, who alluded to long-range political goals in New Haven. The most eloquent of these was Ralph Marcarelli, Jr., Assistant Professor at Southern Connecticut and a doctoral candidate in Italian Literature at Yale. It was Marcarelli's speech that appeared, in abridged form, in the Sunday Register of Nov. 5, and it puts the most important issues most clearly.

Marcarelli first commented on what is a genuine problem among Italian-Americans in New Haven (and, I would add, in all Eastern American cities): the feeling that they are not quite American enough, not "real" Americans. I think it would be generally agreed that this feeling is in part a direct reflection of how Italian-Americans feel they are viewed by other ethnic groups, specifically those who did not have the embarrassment of a foreign language to overcome, like the English and Irish, or who have generally had more time to lose their European culture, like the Germans and Scandinavians. It has been in these other groups' interest to see later arrivals, like the Italians, as less "American" than themselves--a familiar and unfortunate American pattern. It is doubly unfortunate that the non-American features characterizing the ethnic ghettoes of cities like New Haven should be considered in any way undesirable, since they are the very things that give--is it too soon to say "used to give"?--a city like New Haven its interest and charm (I think of the Wooster Square that was, and the Legion Avenue that is already a shadow of itself and on its way to oblivion). At any rate, Gilmore's statements served only to encourage the Italians' not unfounded suspicions that they are sometimes viewed askance by the "Yankees" of New Haven. And the results achieved to date by the Redevelopment juggernaut cannot help adding to their fears that their old comfortable style of neighborhood life is under attack. Certainly there is no place for this way of life in the Agency's vision of the new model city which the Agency --not the Italians, or the Negroes, or the Puerto Ricans!--has decided must be built.

It was to this point that Marcarelli's most eloquent language was addressed. There are actually forces, he said, working in New Haven to weaken the Italian-Americans as a group and to deny them power and influence as individuals. These are serious charges and I quote at length.

> Look closely at the Redevelopment pattern. What has it done? Under the guise of renewal and renovation, the Wooster Square area has been destroyed. Thousands of Italian-Americans were uprooted, no homes were built for them, and they fled the city. Look at the Hill area and you will find that the very same thing has occurred. And the poor, the poor of all ethnic groups, ladies and gentlemen, to whom so much was promised, have been moved from one slum to another, pawns in the game of block-busting. And this monster called Redevelopment, fed by countless millions of federal dollars, is steadily devouring the Italian-American community.... This scheme is one of the most clever forms of group annihilation, multiple group annihilation, ever devised, and we have been its principal targets.

And again:

> Is it possible, in a city in which we are the largest single bloc, that we must sit by and take crumbs from a table where we have every right to be seated?
>
> Make no error, we do not advocate favoritism or protectionism. We do not desire position or power to the derogation or exclusion of any other group. We want only what is ours by right and by virtue of the fact that we are Americans.

Of course it may be hard, at first, for some of us to believe that the Italian Americans in New Haven have been kept from power. The city's affairs, as reported in the press, fairly bristle with Italian names. The GOP and Democratic Town Chairmen are Montano and Barbieri, and the Superintendant of Schools is named Santini. In the recent Aldermanic election, 29 of the 60 candidates--nearly 50%--had Italian names, and of the total of 37 elected officers, 14 were Italian. We have an Italian-American, Robert Giaimo, representing our district in Washington. And let us not overlook, as a concrete sign of Italian influence or power in the city, the Conte School in Wooster Square, generally considered the best public school in the system. To anyone who knows the desperate state of the elementary schools in the Hill, the decision to build Conte School rather than a school to replace Prince or Welch can only be interpreted as a sign of local Italian influence and of the political weakness of the black neighborhoods.

But the story is more complex than meets the eye, and Marcarelli's claims that Italians have been kept from power are in some sense justified. Consider the facts so neatly set out in John Wilhelm's New Journal article, "The Tragedy of Richard Lee," recently reprinted in the AIM newsletter. There are in effect two New Haven governments, the one made up of aldermen and other democratically elected officials, including the mayor; the other the "para-government" of the Redevelopment Agency and CPI. The mayor's special close relationship to Redevelopment has brought about, as Wilhelm shows, a situation where decisions most seriously affecting the physical shape of New Haven, and therefore the quality of life in New Haven, are made by a small group of men who were not elected by the people of New Haven (with the exception of the mayor), and are in no way representative of the city. Most significant, for the points raised by Marcarelli, is the fact that this inner circle of decision makers, made up of Mayor Lee and perhaps half a dozen Redevelopment and CPI planners, includes no Italian names, and hardly any representatives of the local ethnic communities. When we reflect on Redevelopment's power to change the physical nature of New Haven, and remember Marcarelli's criticism (shared by AIM) of the wanton and needless destruction of the Wooster Square neighborhood, it is easy to understand the Italian-Americans' complaint. It seems that no New Haveners who represent the Italian-American communities are involved in the decisions that most drastically affect those communities. To be sure, there are many Italian-Americans and representatives of other ethnic groups who owe their jobs to both agencies; but their primary loyalties inevitably shift to their employers. The black communities as well have no influence on decisions which lead to the mutilation and destruction of their neighborhoods. The decisions are made by men in downtown offices who have never lived in those neighborhoods.

These, in sum, are the complaints voiced publicly a month ago by a segment of the Italians of New Haven. Near the end of his speech Marcarelli asked for the formation of a Council of Italian-American Organizations to serve as "a central agency... to promote mutual understanding and positive contributions toward brotherhood," and to protest instances of "prejudice against an American of Italian or any other origin." This organization, to be known as CIAO (beautiful but, I am told, a pure coincidence!), is also to serve as an interest group to promote and defend Italian culture and influence in New Haven. It will be, officially, non-partisan, but will of course be concerned with the present course Redevelopment is taking here and will hopefully exert some influence in redirecting the thrust of Redevelopment in cases where neighborhoods like Wooster Square are threatened in the future.

So far so good. There still remains the problem of assessing the full meaning of what happened on October 31, in terms of the political realities of New Haven. Three questions come to mind. 1) Was the meeting really representative of the Italians of New Haven? 2) What do they really want? 3) What effect might they have on New Haven?

There is no final or authoritative answer as yet to any of these questions. As for representativeness, the meeting did draw a full auditorium on a less than ideal evening. Marcarelli estimated the crowd at about 1200. The turnout was heavier than that of the "Angry Young Black Men Speak Out" meeting of last August, and the spirit was almost as intense --which is saying a lot. Certainly most of New Haven's Italians who knew of Gilmore's statement did feel some indignitation. But whether the Italian-American community at large realizes that

Redevelopment poses a serious threat to their old neighborhoods, or whether they view the Lee administration as hostile to their interests, is still hard to estimate with any precision. The most important indicator so far was the election, where Lee kept most of the Italian vot, but did lose four wards -- 25, 27, 32 and 33 -- that are largely Italian and normally Democratic. The 32nd and 33rd wards were supposedly disaffected over the issue of airport noise, but is it no more than coincidence that they happen to be Italian?

This brings us to the second point: What do they want? While the initial emphasis of the meeting was on countering anti-Italian prejudice, criticism of Gilmore passed over easily into criticism of his "boss". Richard Lee. The emphasis shifted eventually to Italian political power, the need for more Italian names in the highest offices, and this will clearly be a goal of the movement begun that night, if it gains sufficient momentum. It is important to note that the meeting was held shortly before the elction, and Republican mayoral candidate Clarence Whitney was mentioned several times as an "Italian," since he has an Italian mother. In fact, Whitney was in the audience, and in an interesting bit of by-play Public Defender Alphonse DiBenedetto asked to be recognized and then stated that Whiteny was prepared to come forward and sign a statement swearing that he was not present at the supposed meeting in which, according to Gilmore's claim, Whitney and Barbieri came together to engage in some sort of collusion. DiBenedetto tried to make a motion that Whitney publically sign this statement, but Moderator Bill Ambrogio refused to accept it, repeating several times, "Let's keep this non-political." It is hard to miss the point. It was obviously intended that this meeting have as one immediate goal the strengthening of Clarence Whitney's candidacy and the weakening of Lee's with the Italian voters. In view of the political figures who organized and engineered this meeting, it had every appearance of a tight coalition of Italian Republicans and Italian Democrats against Lee. And some such influence may well have been seen in the defection of four Democratic wards to Whitney. One long-range goal of this meeting, then -- and of the Italians in New Haven, if this group did indeed reflect their fears and aspirations -- is the election once more of the "Italian mayor" that Rev. Gilmore was interpreted as being against. It follows from the Italians' awareness that they are the largest single bloc and their feeling that they have been denied the highest offices, that they think it is high time the city had an Italian mayor again. It also may follow from Rev. Gilmore's complaints about Alderman Ferraiuolo and his ambiguous warnings about the dangers threatening New Haven, that he really does think that at Italian mayor -- or, to put it more fairly, that just any Italian mayor -- may not be what New Haven really needs at the present time.

As for the last question, the ultimate effect for New Haven, only time and the good intentions of those involved can give us that answer. The desire to deflect Redevelopment from its systematic destruction of the old ethnic centers is heartwarming, and well expressed in Marcarelli's speech. If the organization proposed that evening (CIAO) can do anything to preserve the small stores people can walk to, and save us from the spreading asphalt blight that seems to measure our so-called progress in terms of parking lots and six-lane highways, that will be wonderful. If the access to political office and power of more of the city's Italian-Americans can lead to a situation where the needs of all ethnic groups are met with understanding and genuine human concern, again that will be wonderful.

Yet the fact of New Haven life is that the Negroes' and Puerto Ricans' needs are far more critical than those of any other ethnic group -- most Italians are, after all, quite comfortable by comparison -- and the administration to be most greatly desired is the one that will do most to solve the city's problems of racial hatred and economic inequality. It is not yet sufficiently clear, from what I know of Italian-American sentiment in the past, that one of their major goals, if they had more power, would be the advancement of the Negro to a position of equal rights and opportunities. Perhaps a new and more promising era awaits us, if CIAO's pledge to combat discrimination against any American is energetically pursued and effectively implemented. But the October 31 meeting simply gives us too little to go by; and so Italian power in New Haven must remain, for the present, a question mark.

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to AIM newsletter

A CALL TO WOMEN

The United States 90th Congress, 2nd Session, opens on January 15, 1968, at 12 noon in joint session. The Jeannette Rankin Brigade, a coaltion of organized peace, church, and individual women, dressed in black will hold a vigil around the United States capitol for the 15,000 American soldiers and millions of other people who have died in the Vietnam war. Plans are being made to have a group of Senators and Congressmen cosponsor a resolution on the floor of the Senate in the name of the Brigade demanding that Congress, as its first order of business, resolve to end the war.

Following the vigil, the group will meet and convene a Congress of American Women to officially support the resolution and to plan for political action around the country. One proposal to be made to the administration through the Congress by the New Haven delegation will be an immediate institution of a cabinet status Department of Peace to develop programs for the time when a war economy will convert to a peace economy.

A number of New Haven women have met and are making plans to organize a group of women to go to Washington to be a part of the Jeannette Rankin Brigade. Arrangements are being made for transportation, and information and details can be obtained by writing c/o Connecticut Jeannette Rankin Committee at 84 Broadway, or phoning G. Hymer, at 387-3773.

MEET OUR PRESIDENT

Taken from Ramparts, December 1967, Vol 6, No. 5, page 55:

Statement made by LBJ in Congress on March 15, 1948 (on behalf of the rising Texas aircraft industry), "No matter what else we have of offensive or defensive weapons, without superior air power America is a bound and throttled giant, impotent and easy prey to any yellow dwarf with a pocket knife."

A scene from the December 8 Resistance rally on the New Haven Green. Several individuals turned in their draft cards at ceremony in Battel Chapel.

VIGIL IN SECOND YEAR

For more than a year now individuals have gathered on the New Haven Green every single Wednesday from 12:300 to 1:30 p.m. in a Silent Vigil of protest to the War in Vietnam. The Vigil has always been an impressive sight for hundreds of passersby, chiefly because of the silent, reflective tone it has set. People going past obviously make note of it, some stop to ask questions, some simply stand across the street and look on, others may wave encouragement or indicate hostility as they drive by. Whatever their reaction, all who witness the Vigil are confronted by it, and people who have doubts about the War are perhaps encouraged to see others stand peaceably in protest. The Vigil has definitely had its effect. One newspaper reporter even asserted that the Thursday noon flag raising ceremonies on the Green are a counter action to the Vigil.

Everyone who is disturbed, upset or angry over the War should be reminded that their presence at this demonstration is important. Too often the same diligent people show up and wonder where all the rest of the protestors are. At a time when an increasingly greater proportion of the young people are carrying the burden of protest, often enduring arrest, beating and jailing, it would be particularly encouraging to see some of our older people at the Vigil.

Come during your work lunch hour, come with your children and baby carriages, but COME. This is something we can all do, lest we forget what is being done in our name.

EVERY WEDNESDAY - 12:30 to 1:30 - NEW HAVEN GREEN STAND SILENTLY, READ OR MEDIATATE - BUT THE SILENCE IS IMPORTANT.

ELM HAVEN'S "LEAP"

By Paul Wagman

Standing in the middle of a fork in Dixwell Avenue is a large, odd-looking building. The star of David above the main entrance proclaims a synagogue, but the sign outside clearly reads, "Summerfiled Methodist Church." Inside, my mild surprise was maintained. As I walked in, I heard the opening bars of Beethoven's "Fur Elise." The Pianist was a 12 year old boy from the neighborhood. Stepping into another room, I watched a boy ponder over the placement of a Tinker Toy into the arrangement he had constructed. He was, I learned, building a model of the Constellation Orion.

These boys are participants in LEAP, Life Enrichment Activities Program. The program, founded in 1965 by clinical psychologist Dr. George Witt, Executive Director, is designed to provide exciting educational and cultural experiences for creative children from New Haven's predominantly Negro Elm Haven district. The staff consists of about 30 volunteers, mostly white, operating under an annual budget of $13,000 financed by white donations.

LEAP's focus is on 12 Elm Haven children chosen for their outstanding creative potential shown in tests administered to hundreds of second, third and fourth graders. According to Witt, their potential was going unrealized for two reasons: First, disadvantaged environments like Elm Haven do not offer children the educational and cultural stimulation available to middle and upper class children. Second, what latent creativity such a child does possess is, Witt thinks, stamped out of him in schools that are not designed for the very creative. LEAP's aim is to attack these problems with an intensive program of highly interesting educational and cultural activities, including musical lessons, art and drama, athletics, creative writing, science classes, and weekly excursions to the public library (about 20 hours of after school time per week for each child). In Witt's opinion the time has paid off in genuine advances in social skills, speaking ability, and ease in getting along with others. Moreover, school grades have risen from an average of C- to B+. Almost all the children have become school leaders and 2 are class officers.

To reinforce and extend the child's LEAP experiences, the Family Enrichment Program was also established. Witt feels that the schools are culturally foreign to the Elm Haven child. He does not possess the skills the school demands as the fundamental prerequisite for successful classroom performance. Moreover, since his par ents usually do not know how to reinforce the school experience, any influence the schools do have on the children is weakened at home. In the Family Enrichment Program the family of each child is given a Home Study Leader (HSL) who spends one evening a week with the family, organizing the children into various educational and cultural activities - typing, charade games, reading, etc. The purpose is to bring an educational-cultural enviornment into the home itself that can be perpetuated by the family. At least, it is hoped, the foreignness of such activities is reduced and parents learn something about backing up the school experience. The tangible results of the HSL program have been a statistically significant rise in grades of the siblings of LEAP children.

Yet LEAP concentrates on only 12 exceptional children. Witt, however, feels this is merited because he believes community leaders (which do not now exist in Elm Haven he feels) must be developed before large-scale efforts to add educational and cultural stimulation to the lives of Elm Haven people generally can be made. Witt points out, however, that selecting out only creative children for special programs does not constitute a defense of the present school system's approach to the average child. He feels the school system can learn from LEAP in two ways:

One, they could incorporate some form of the Family Enrichment Program as required training for teachers of disadvantaged children. The teacher could, Witt feels, increase the parent's ability to foster skills needed in the classroom, learn where to adjust his own curriculum to merge with existing skills, and could aid in mutual understanding between the school and the community. Second, Witt believes the schools lack small groups to which children can belong, sharing positive aims and gaining a positive identity. He maintains that pupils in disadvantaged areas have only negative experiences as a group - their common opposition to the teacher. Perhaps groups like LEAP help alleviate this problem.

Witt feels his focused approach on a few children is exactly what is needed to demonstrate what can be done in Elm Haven and what techniques are needed to do it. Already the program has shown how it can affect others. Many teenage brothers and sisters of LEAP children have begun, voluntarily, to take lessons in various artistic fields, and the rise in grades of the 70 siblings of LEAP children is impressive. Moreover, parents of LEAP children have begun to set up new programs for neighborhood children suited to their own particular skills.

It is questionable though whether LEAP children will become the future leaders of their communities (most have already left their original school for a white one in another neighborhood.) Dr. Witt, nevertheless, feels they have had a dramatic impact on the children of Elm Haven. However that may be, LEAP offers some challenging ideas to New Haven's school system.

state street meeting cont.

the State Street project. He told us what we already knew. When pushed, say on the total cost, he fumbled, evaded, finally admitted to $8 million for the garage, which at current prices, if you look at the estimates given for the Crown garages, will probably be closer to $20 million -- not including the new road, etc. When pushed on another point, he admitted that there had been no studies of the fumes from the enormous increase in cars that a 4,000 car garage and six-lane road would produce. And again, when pushed, he admitted that the project might take 10-15 years to complete ("But we don't really know.") He stated that there would be no stairs needed to cross the roads. But steep sets of stairs joining pedestrian bridges over the highway are clearly shown on Redevelopment drawings and maps, and all the major streets from Wooster Square -- Chapel, Court, Grand -- have a considerable grade from the railroad tracks to State Street. There was no discussion of how this problem would be handled.

Shannon kept saying that crossing the New State Street would be just like crossing any downtown street. But the Agency's own figures for State Street predict a rate of 38,000 cars per day. For comparison, the heaviest thoroughfares in New Haven -- Whalley, Whitney, and the Connecticut Turnpike -- now carry about 20,000 - 25,000 cars per day. This is not to say that the Agency didn't inflate their figures to justify the road and have now deflated them to pacify us. They probably did. But they can't have it both ways. And the fact is that State Street is already more difficult to cross at Court Street than the average downtown street, as several of the older people brought out at the meeting.

If we were a jury judging the Redevelopment Agency in its presentation, Mr. Shannon would have been fired. For, as a friend of mine said, he doesn't even have the one necessary qualification of the expert -- expertise. Why should we pay this agency to work for us, which is what we do, when its representative is not only rude and insulting, but doesn't even seem to know anything? Or, if he does, he has no interest in telling us about it. The Mayor ought to know that this kind of performance is bad politics, if nothing else.

One thing clear to all of us at the end of the meeting was that the major decisions about State Street had long since been made in the bureaucratic recesses of the Redevelopment Agency and the Mayor's office. Nothing we could say at this meeting was going to change anything. Not only were we not discussing alternative plans, we weren't even discussing changes in the one plan they gave us.

A disappointment to me was the ease with which everyone accepted the idea that the buildings on the railroad side of State Street are in such bad shape thay they must be torn down. Much older buildings than these have been saved elsewhere for social, historical, esthetic, political, or moral reasons. Even considering the economics, I bet it would not cost $20-$30 million (a low estimate of the cost of the Agency's project) to save all of them.

The small businessmen, except the two to whom promises have been made, once again felt there had been a lot of noise about nothing. Alan Greenberg pointed out that there were many programs available to help these small businessmen which were not really being used because this (small businesses) is not the "image" of the city that the Agency wants to project. In the past year, we have heard the stories of dozens of storeowners whose businesses have been ruined and lives drastically disrupted by the combination of big business and bureaucracy now represented in city hall.

But the problem remains -- people continue to get pushed around, the juggernaught moves ahead. The people of Wooster Square plan another meeting on January 18 which will focus on the whole "loop" road. This road, unless present plans are stopped, will ring the inner-city within the boundaries of State Street, Trumbull Street, Howard Avenue, and the Turnpike. A meeting has just been held in the Dwight neighborhood where, with an honesty to match Shannon's, Redevelopment officials Carmen Romano and John Torello kept repeating "There are no plans at this time for an inner-circumferential highway on Howe Street." "There are no drawn plans."

Maybe, just maybe, the people of New Haven have been pushed about as far as they will go. Maybe they will begin to mobilize to stop the destruction of their city. A healthy sign is that some of the Aldermen are beginning to move. Since they have to authorize the bonds for the parking garages, and since they depend on votes, they may respond to public pressure. Further, direct legal challenge may be mounted on a number of points. In any event, much work remains to be done.

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